

ANAND MARG

SOILING

THE SAFFRON ROBE

Nawal Kishore

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Soiling the Saffron Robe

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No.....

Shri Shri Sri Anandamayee Ashram

BANARAS.

Nawal Kishore

Shri NAWAL KISHORE is an ex-Acharya (Instructor) and Kapalik (performer of rites with human skulls) of Anand Marg. He joined Anand Marg in 1957 and was associated as an active whole-time worker with the political wing of the organisation. He rose to be Finance Secretary of the Proutist Bloc of India, a political front organisation of Anand Marg. Over the years, he came to know intimately about the illegal and violent activities of Anand Marg carried out in utmost secrecy. In 1971, he revolted and left the Organisation.

HISTORY is replete with instances of ambitious megalomaniacs attempting to gain mastery over the minds of the credulous. With the increasing number of the followers and the faithfuls their lust for power climbs. No holds barred they try to widen their dragnet adopting all methods and techniques. In a country like India pseudo-spiritual rhetoric comes in handy as the most potent weapon of their armoury. If the dream of political power is added to their plan of spiritual domination, the worse for the nation.

Such has been the man, named Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar *alias* 'Anandmurti'. An ex-railway employee of Jamalpur workshop, P.R. Sarkar has turned out to be one of the most dangerous seditionists with an eye on controlling the destiny of crores of people.

Myths and Legends

Born at Jamalpur on April 1, 1923, he was the eldest son of one Lakshmi Narayan Sarkar, an accounts clerk in the railway workshop. His father at the time of his birth had already gained some popularity as he was running a free homoeopathic dispensary. P.R. Sarkar's father died when he was a student. He started working as accounts clerk in the railway workshop. As is customary with many a charlatan a number of stories and legends began to circulate.

People were told by interested associates of P.R. Sarkar that when Anandmurti was a little boy of only four, Shiva Mantras of considerable lengths were slated in his brain by some miracle. His public relations minions repeat *ad nauseum*

a puerile fiction of how a hunter on his errand was flabbergasted when he saw that a ferocious tiger was speedily ascending a steep hill at break-neck speed with a very small boy riding his back ; the boy being none other than Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. Another interesting figment related with relish is how a fierce storm once ravaged Jamalpur and on the shoulders of the cyclonic waves the tiny boy was lifted and taken to a distance of many miles to the banks of the Ganges. There at the holy river-bank 'Anandmurti' came face to face with Lord Shiva. All these tall tales are narrated as if they are gospel truths together with the injunction that 'Anandmurti' has prohibited his lieutenants from talking about the miracles of his life. This is just to supplement with a admixture of mystery and awe the bagful of humbugs and thereby inspire a super-natural trepidation amongst the devotees.

Another similar yarn was about his horoscope. The legend coined was that when this child was born the Pandit preparing the horoscope forecast that the boy "had the qualities of a king and yet he would become a sadhu". This story is told in India about almost every new born male child because the horoscope maker hopes to get better remuneration from the parents.

According to another story the Head of Railway Workshop, an Englishman, was very much worried about the welfare of his wife who was in England. She was severely ill and the doctors were not able to diagnose the trouble exactly. Anandmurti closed his eyes for a few seconds and assured his superior that his wife would recover soon. The lady underwent a minor operation and came back to India hale and hearty. The grateful pair invited him to tea and the lady was all tears of gratitude to the young boy. She went to the extent of insisting that this very man (Anandmurti) was there in the hospital at London dissuading the doctors from removing her kidney. Was it only a case of self-hypnosis by a grateful woman or only a way of expressing her gratitude ? None can be sure. This story raised the stock of Sarkar very high in the eyes of

his colleagues and from now onwards 'Anandmurti' commenced his journey of spiritual conquest.

Anand Marg Founded

How easily the innocent could fall a prey to the guiles of Sarkar can best be illustrated by the case of one Acharya Dashrath Singh, a school teacher at Jamalpur and a great devotee of Anandmurti. He narrates: "Once I committed a mistake and I was thinking of asking Anandmurtiji to give me proper punishment. I could not find courage to confess before him. As usual one evening while walking with Anandmurtiji, Baba (P. R. Sarkar) suddenly said to me 'Dashrath, if anybody realises his own mistake that is his punishment'. I was completely taken aback. Yes, he knows everything." Anybody can testify that this sentence is repeated hundreds of times by every spiritual leader to the congregation day and night. Surprisingly enough this incident is advanced by that educated school-teacher as the final proof and first-hand testimony of P. R. Sarkar's miraculous power. Within two or three years, on January 9, 1955 to be precise, in the Railway Quarter No. 339, the Society called "ANAND MARG" (the Path to Bliss) was founded. Sarkar became the President of this new organisation, while one P. K. Chatterjee was made General Secretary.

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The aim of the society was declared as 'spiritual salvation'. Sarkar widened his area of influence by inviting school and college students to his so-called spiritual sessions. The membership of the society rapidly increased and with this the ambitions of Anandmurti too. What impressed the youngsters so much was the prodigious memory of Anandmurti. Mr. M. N. Roychoudhary, a colleague of Sarkar during his clerical days at Jamalpur narrates: "I have had no personal experience of

Sarkar's spiritual powers, but we were all bewildered by his fantastic memory and ability to speak different languages."

Political Overtones

A study of the tenets and principles of Anand Marg, as disclosed by the writings of Sarkar and his devotees in various pamphlets and booklets presents this cult as a bundle of religious, ethical, metaphysical and mystical ideas and practices amalgamated into the whole which has unmistakable political overtones. The declared ideal of Anandmurti is 'Sadvipra Society', which alone can rid us of all problems and help us move ahead on the path of progress. 'Sadvipras' are those whose all efforts are directed entirely towards the attainment of *Anand* (the bliss). "They are strong in morality and are always ready to wage war against immoral activities...."

About the *modus operandi* of 'Sadvipras' Anandmurti is very outspoken. He says "the Sadvipra is not an inactive witness. He is an active participant... *For this he may have to resort to physical violence, because Sadvipra will have to strike at the source of power which is tending to become the exploiter.... Sadvipras may have to resort to physical force.....* Ultimately in the Sadvipra Society there will operate the principles of progressive socialism (Prout)".

(*Ideal for New Era*, 'B. M. Sinha p. 11—13)

The 'Spiritual Aspirant' of Anand Marg is called '*Sadhak*' and in '*Sadhna*' moral education is imparted with an eye towards oneness with Brahma. The social structure which shall thus ultimately be formed is called PROUT (Progressive Utilisation Theory). The five fundamental principles expounded by 'Prout' exhibit pompous verbosity and confused thinking. For instance, the fourth tenet states: "There should be a proper adjustment amongst the physical, metaphysical, mundane, supermundane

and spiritual utilisations." What does he want to convey? Can it be explained by Anandmurti himself?

However this confusion of ideas shrouded in long-winded phraseology seemed to attract the young boys and the poor down-trodden.

Coterie of Fanatics and first defectors

The strength of the Marg grew rapidly and in 1960, Sarkar hit upon the idea of creating a coterie of fanatic 'Sadhaks' called avadhuts. Shortly thereafter women too were baptized and 'avadhutikas' were initiated into this hierarchy. In 1964 sprang up the township of Anand Nagar. Only those persons who took oath to work as full-timers for the whole life were initiated as 'avadhuts'. A special outfit was prescribed for avadhuts—saffron coloured clothes, moustache, beared and hair and a dagger, were the distinctive insignias for 'Avadhuts'.

An interesting anecdote about 'avadhuts' is worth noticing. Mr. P. K. Chatterjee, the first General Secretary of Anand Marg was commanded by P. R. Sarkar to become an avadhut. P. K. Chatterjee resentfully retorted, "Why?.....you first initiate yourself as an avadhut and thereafter alone I shall oblige." Sarkar replied, "There is no need for me to do this, I am the founder of Anand Marg and the rules of the institution are not applicable to me."

No man can be a hero to his valet. Naturally Chatterjee who from the first day knew Anandmurti through and through could not be bullied by this pompous claimant of spirituality. He angrily rebuked Anandmurti as a 'fascist despot' and bade the organisation good-bye in 1965. The high-handedness of Sarkar was resented by many of his initial colleagues who all left one after another. This in a way suited Anandmurti who was so happy to get rid of persons, who intimately knew him as an

ordinary clerk and were acquainted with his follies and foibles, weaknesses and viles. To an old trusted friend of his Anandmurti confided, "I personally want that old colleagues may leave the organisation. It is better that the new entrants may not know too much about my past life as this will facilitate the building-up of my image."

(*'Maya'* monthly, March 1974)

Before long 'Sarkar' established himself as a divine being. His devotees gave him the epithet, "Tarakbrahma" (the divine presence in the frame of flesh and bones combining finite and infinite qualities in one being). 'Such a being descends to earth when there is too much sin on this earth and it becomes unbearable for the people'. (This reminds one of the incarnation hymn in the Geeta pronounced by Lord Krishna). Small wonder that his followers started calling him 'Krishnavataar' (the incarnation of Lord Krishna). These tall claims and taller assignments of Anandmurti are vehemently disowned and even condemned by the recognised leaders of Hindu faith.

Condemned by religious leaders

Jagad Guru Shankaracharya Shri Niranjan Dev Tirth of Puri has denounced Anand Marg and declared, "I warn that all people should beware of the institutions like Anand Marg and Brahm Kumaris. They are arch enemies of the faith, the nation and humanity. These organisations mislead the people by false claims of leading them to teach Yoga (spiritual union) Gyaan (supreme knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and attainment of Param Pad (eternal position), this way they induce people to leave the path of righteousness."

(*Aryavart* daily of Patna dated 2-11-1965)

This condemnation of Anand Marg is not confined to Sanatanists alone but the other branches of Hindu faith, Arya

Samajists, too decry the philosophy of Marg in no uncertain terms. Acharya Ramanand Shastri, Vice-President Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Bihar, states that "the philosophical basis of Anand Marg is no authentic scriptures but the despotic commands of Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar....Anand Marg indulges in apotheosis calling Sarkar as God and is against Indian culture and traditions." [*What is Anand Marg* (Hindi), pp. 13-14].

Startling political ideas

The political ideas of Anand Marg, are still more startling. The founding fathers of Indian Constitution had opted for democracy, the tenet of their political faith. For Anand Marg democracy is anathema. Anandmurti says:

—"In a democratic form of Government only securing majority of votes proves the fitness of a person. But his ability is not examined everywhere in due manner."

—"That the adults can vote (in a democracy) is, of course, very pleasant to the ears but in such a situation politically unconscious voters weaken the Government. Hence the illiterate or the ill-educated persons should reasonably be kept deprived of their franchise."

—"Democracy in an illiterate country like India is a farce. In all such countries shrewd and fraudulent persons can easily capture the votes of illiterates or even they can purchase them'.... The ruling class in a democracy as in India, keeps the masses deliberately ignorant and illiterate because this helps it to remain in power."

(*Ideals for New Era*)

The corollary to all this is the question—what then can be termed as the best system of government? In the opinion of Anandmurti: "Democracy will be considered successful when Progressive Socialism (*Prout*) will thrive under its structure, otherwise the government of the people, by the people and for the people will be transformed into a government of the fools, by the fools and for the fools."

(*Ibid.*)

On 'Socialism', the ultimate goal of progressive thinkers everywhere, Sarkar says: "There cannot be a socialistic government under democratic framework. He who speaks high of socialism from a democratic platform befools the public. It is just to avoid Constitutional lapses and to secure public confidence that leaders speak on socialism and promise to establish a socialistic pattern of society which is nothing but absurdity. The so-called leaders are nothing but socialist show-boys."

"The dialectical materialism cannot be benign to the human society. It can be of some use for a particular period in a particular country and for a particular persons."

(*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32)

No opponent of socialism today has the gumption to preach capitalism. Anandmurti is too shrewd not to understand this and takes care to have a dig at capitalism too. He says: "Capitalism in India has misappropriated the national capital and inspite of the rising curve of national capital, income per capita has gone down. Indian capitalism has accomplished all this by dominantly influencing the political set-up and has brought forth monopolistic-capitalism quite ahead." (*Notes on Social Philosophy: An Anandmarg Publication* p. 46).

Himself, the Messiah

The fanatically ambitious mountebank parades what he likes to call a philosophy of his own. "Capitalism makes men slaves and communism makes men beasts." Says he "when the old order breaks down giving an opportunity to corrupt and immoral elements to get into power and retain it through dishonest and perverted means, when society is faced with an ideological vacuum....then a man is born with a new hope, a new faith and a new, powerful and dynamic ideology for the survival of human beings....He regulates the human progress and removes the impediments that come in its way. He provides guidance and inspiration to both the individual and society as a whole." Such a person, in the opinion of Anand Margis has already arrived in India and he is none other than Anandmurti.

At a Seminar of Anandmargis held at Varanasi from 26th to 29th January 1970, it was propounded that "the First Tarak Brahma was Lord Shiva, the Second was Lord Krishna and the Third is Lord Anandmurtiji. In this third phase of God's incarnation 'Lord Anandmurtiji has come on the earth as Tarak Brahma with a definite mission in his mind. His mission is that everyone should purify himself with *Sadhna*—let everyone be a *Sadhak*. He has come on earth when *Tantra Sadhna* was just at the stage of diminishing rather everyone was afraid of *Tantra Sadhna* due to certain evil practices which had developed in *Tantra Sadhna* during this intervening period. He is, however, giving a new image and a clear picture of *Tantra Sadhna* to make it popular amongst the masses. It is of two kinds—(1) Indoor and (2) Outdoor. Indoor *Tantra Sadhna* is that which is done at Home and Outdoor *Sadhna* is that which is performed in Burning Ghats (Cremation Grounds). There is no difference between the two. Tarak Brahma has no need to perform *Sadhna* but to put influence on Shishyas, he also does *Sadhna* while in contact with the masses.

Paramatma or the Tarak Brahma can do anything and everything possible on the earth but He cannot hate anybody. Every

person is equal in the eyes of Baba—No differentiation due to caste, creed or wealth.”

With such a personality cult as its basis, one should not be surprised if Anand Marg preaches stark dictatorship.... The Chief of Anand Marg says: *“The intelligentsia will not support the theory which has no practical value. Welfare of society is not possible either by dialectical materialism or democracy. Thus, the benevolent dictatorship of morally and spiritually Sadvipras is the solution.”*

This concept of benevolent dictatorship snacks of Nazi ideology to a disgusting degree. According to Anandmurti “the political leadership throughout history has failed because the leaders had no moral base, their approach was one-sided—some touching economic concept, some political and some religious, and spiritualism was utterly absent.” Anandmurti has, the devotees are told, no such weaknesses and his appearance on the scene pronounces the advent of a Messiha.

Exposed by Mrs. Sarkar

What sort of a man is this self-proclaimed God of the twentieth century? The most severe condemnation of this man has come from his own wife, Mrs. Uma Sarkar. In a statement issued during 1971 she levelled very serious charges against her husband. She said :

“Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar *alias* Shri Anandmurti, the spiritual preceptor of Anand Marg is my husband. He is not merely a spiritual preceptor, he regards himself as a parallel to God. And to prove it he has laboured a lot. But his greed knows no bounds. He does not remain satisfied in the field of religiously—his greed is too high. The more he acquired power the more he aspired for it. That is why he totally forgot what is right and what is wrong. He did not create spiritual aspirants

from among those boys whom he lured for a spiritual life. He began to engage them in different filthy acts.

He cared little for their moral upliftment and forgot completely about their future. He made it clear to them that they were to work and began to exert pressure on them with some utopian scheme of work. He inflicted brutal punishment on them when they failed to work out the scheme and did not care to think whether that was possible for them or not; whereupon with a view to get rid of this torture those boys had to take recourse to deceitful ways. Once they resorted to sin, they increased it gradually. They began to call their preceptor God before him although they passed bad remarks behind his back. I went on watching everything silently, because I knew that it would bear no fruit had I protested. But at last I lost my endurance when I found that instead of creating them as spiritual aspirants, he declared them as traitors and caused their murder at the slightest cause. I could not believe my own ears when he himself, being a spiritual leader, was teaching the process of murder. And still they were his 'sons'. I made a protest but in vain. He declared himself "not guilty".

"It is not only this much. I have been watching for the last four years how he has framed different stories on my innocent sanyasin sons of tender age and how he has proved them to have been girls in those fabricated plots relating to their past lives and then indulged in homo-sexual intercourse with them. I have protested and said that it was sin causing harm to the sons. But far from rectifying himself, he accelerated the pace of the sinful act. In the name of Dharma has anybody done a dharma of this sort in broad daylight? Has this taken place anywhere? In every sphere he has veiled truth by untruth and in reply to vehement protest on my part he has played such a part that it became much difficult to say anything. Finding it difficult to bear with this sin those sons, who protested and left the organisation, have been caught and made to court death. A list has been made of those sons who have not yet been

butchered. He is acting on the one hand as Lord Shiva and Tarak Brahma Himself; yet on the other, failing to conquer his carnal desires, has been making efforts with a vengeance to become the emperor of the world. He has been making a big plan so that all Tantra, all art and literature of the world, all the great souls and saints, all geniuses, go into complete oblivion. He wants to establish himself everywhere and desires to remain one and unparalleled. Has anybody in the human history ever before committed such a crime making plans in the name of Dharma? Nobody knows how many lives in simple faith, in search of God, are being lost in the darkness."

"From the standpoint of acting, this sort of actor is hardly to be found. From the standpoint of cunning intellect and inhuman cruelty he has no equal. It is true that man could not recognise it directly whenever sin has been committed in this world. But to commit sin in the name of Dharma playing the role of God and acting as the repository of all power has happened for the first time. My sons have been accepting untruth as truth, night as day under the magic spell of his psychological lecture and brain wash. At last I could bear no longer and stood against all sins."

"I asked him to admit all his sins but still he kept unassailed. Then one night I said squarely to his face that it was impossible for me to live in that place of sin. I bade him goodbye; still was 'God' and so unperturbed. I came out catching hold of the hand of my only child. From that hour we are shelterless and completely insecure. After this I know that it hardly takes any time to declare me as an enemy and to spread propaganda of all ignominy against me. That is why he did not think about where I went that night. He had declared that we are enemies. We mean, myself and those who are with me; they are—Vishokhanand avadhut, his own personal assistant; Siddhananda avadhut, the Secretary of ERAWS (Education Relief and Welfare Section) the biggest department of Anand Marg; Ciranda avadhut, the Publication Secretary; and

avadhutika Anand Maetreyee, the Secretary of Women Welfare Section and his only son of twelve."

"Being his wife I had requested my husband to refrain from committing sin. I felt the prick of conscience and vehemently impressed upon him that this type of sin cannot go ahead in the name of Dharma and his sort of oppression cannot continue on those who are coming to us as our sons. This is the major offence I have committed and I have been declared enemy. Has anyone heard in the world that he himself on whom a son meditates as God has taken the role of a heartless butcher? If in the garb of a Sanyasin one indulges in dirty politics who will keep faith on a Sanyasin? I have heard and seen how sin is being scaled here pilling up case after case in the court of law.

I give a clarion call to all men of conscience, I call all the parents of those sons who are no more in the world, I call upon the Government—let them come and judge. If such a colossal crime is tolerated any longer there will remain nothing in the world as Truth and Dharma.....".

The Anand Marg founder's wife again alleged on February 24, 1972, in a New Delhi Press Conference that her husband was carrying on "hypocritical and heinous activities in the garb of Dharma." Mrs. Uma Sarkar told the press that "growth of such an organisation can be a serious threat to society." She said "Sarkar had become deaf to the voice of reason and exploited the simplicity of the young volunteers of the Marg for his ulterior ends in the shape of political power or otherwise". She had left Anand Marg with deep anguish and sorrow as she could "no longer tolerate the activities of the Marg. Apart from the abnormalities carried on in the garb of religion, it was impossible for me to be a silent spectator to the inhuman, senseless and brutal happenings in the Marg." She alleged that "Anandmurti had arrogated Godhood to himself and under this self-created delusion, he stooped to commit acts which even the lowest in society would dread to pursue."

Charge of homosexuality

The exposure of the black deeds of the fake saint-father is not confined to his wife alone. In the joint press conference addressed by four co-founders of Anand Marg and the author, it was disclosed that "when the tendency of homosexuality in Sarkar also became known this was justified as being in accordance with secret "Tantrik" practices which would spiritually elevate the disciple. The doubting disciple himself was also satisfied with the explanation that the act of homosexuality was a result of the disciple's wish in the past life to worship the "Parama Purusa" in the form of 'Radha' and that this unfulfilled desire was acting as a barrier to his ultimate liberation. It was only to be expected that in such a state of affairs all the tenets of morality lost their meaning and every immoral act of Shri Sarkar or any worker could find justification."

In January 1972 issue of Secular Democracy, certain erstwhile Anand Marg functionaries, who left the organisation in disgust, castigated the cult without mincing words. Acharya Chidatmanand avadhut, the circle Commander of Volunteer Social Service (para-military wing of the Marg) for Andhra and Mysore State wrote: "I was his slogan 'Let the suffering be the asset of your life, suffering will help you to establish Sadvipra Raj'. But he enjoyed the highest splendour of life with all pomp and show. Anand Marg was meant for the liberation of spirit and service to all, but in practice it was diametrically the opposite. It meant degeneration of soul and liquidation of all. Anandmurti whom we used to worship and whom we made the object of adoration, who once commanded the hearts of many by his super-diplomacy, has now been found to be a pervert criminal.

"As I violently opposed the wrong system of the organisation, I was called a traitor and conspirator, because I exposed the loopholes. Murder, rape, homosexuality soared high. Disciples as also the Guru were corrupted. The corrupt workers were

given high responsibilities. The higher officials with Anandmurti had gone mad. One avadhut was caught red handed indulging in homosexuality in Delhi P.F.I. Office. He was pardoned by Anandmurti. We thought how merciful is Anandmurti! No! Anandmurti was himself sodomist and caught by his own wife Smt. Uma Sarkar."

Shocking Murders

Acharya Krishnanand avadhut, Member Central Committee Proutist Forum of India lamented: "Anandmurti claimed himself to be Taraka Brahma *i.e.* even Higher & Greater than God. I had blind faith in him, although sometimes intellectual and rational analysis of his work and programme confused me. But considering it my own fault and loophole, I tried to reconcile.

"Towards the end of 1970, Anandmurti started declaring disloyal workers as enemies, fifth columnists and it was alleged that he got them secretly murdered. I was in the dark about all that happened. But after a few months I was told of the horrors of murder and I was terribly shocked, my faith in Anandmurti being vigorously shaken from within. But I could not express my feelings to him nor could I retort or resist lest I should be condemned to death."

Disillusionment

Every system and organisation breaks down under its own excessive burden if the framework is incapable of bearing the same. The power lust and financial demands of Anandmurti began to irk his followers. Those who had come for spiritual Sadhna and to establish a moralist society soon found themselves hunting for smugglers, blackmarketeers, habitual tax-evaders to extract money from them under the influence and

pressure of high Anandmargi Government officials, for the exccultiod of plans given by Anandmurti.

Anandmurti remained unremitting in his demands and started penalising avadhuts with a heavy hand for every little act of omission and commission. Partly to keep them in terror and partly in the belief that only in this way could he fulfil his dreams, he inflicted on them the most brutal, primitive and continual punishment. The ex-avadhuts narrate in unbelievable terms how they used to take heavy whipping at a time and pass urine and stools in their clothes. There are instance of solitary confinement and regular beating for days together. One has to see to believe that such monstrous practices are prevalent today in an organization claiming itself to be presided over by God.

Obviously, such coercive and dictatorial methods could bear fruit only to a limited extent. Things, ordinarily beyond the capacity of an organisation which lacked constant financial resources, were accomplished in a remarkably short-time. However, there is a limit, beyond which human endurance cracks, even if the strain is being imposed by God himself. So some of the avadhuts left the organisation while others started whispers of dissent.

Besides this aspect of inhuman physical torture, there were other reasons which made the avadhuts indignant and doubtful. In the beginning Anandmurti's bold postures had given them the impression that the materialisation of his plan was just a matter of time—a very short time at that. As year after year passed they saw the hollowness of Anandmurti's bombasts. They plainly found Anandmurti shifting emphasis from one nonsense to another and thus for ever keeping the workers in useless distractions. While in one whole year he would use avadhuts to organise classes on the same old theme of PROUT and Anand Marg, they found him declaring the other year as Katha-Kirtan year! In this they were supposed to chant **Baba Nam Kevalam** and dance to the tune of it for the entire year.

Gone was the dynamic, invulnerable and mercurial Anandmurti of the yesteryears! What remained now was a complacent dictator who, while he himself drove an imported car, lived in airconditioned bungalows and relaxed by doing pervert sexual acts with some of his own disciples, preached suffering as "asset" to the workers. No wonder the flight of avadhuts increased day by day.

Cruelty Unlimited

It is at this stage that Anandmurti perhaps crossed all limits of cruelty and turned into the worst megalomaniac. He had exhausted the efficacy of all the methods of a trickster, exhibitionists, magician, omnipresent guru, omniscient scholar, master psychologist, versatile actor and finally the omnipotent God to keep his workers under sway and submission. Now he was to try yet another one.

Around July 1970, it is alleged, he ordered the execution of the first batch of avadhuts who had shown signs of wavering. Panic stricken ex-avadhuts running from place to place and hiding now paused to narrate bizzare stories of the execution of as many as 36 sanyasis in the manner that could well pass for an account of murder rites conducted in the age of cannibalism.

The execution squads used to persuade their comrade-in-arms for a ride or walk in Chhotanagpur jungles, where their abdomens were ripped open, genitals chopped off, eyes taken out and faces disfigured.

In the month of June 1971 there was a clash between the local people and Anand Marg workers in Ranchi following which the Anandmurti stealthily fled to Patna in a convoy of cars. A West Germany based American national Andrews who was staying with Anandmurti played an important role in this

flight. This was another factor for disillusionment. Another blow to Anandmurti's supernatural image had been registered in Cooch Behar in 1969 at the hands of local people. Following a clash he along with others was arrested and roughly treated by the mob.

The result of these developments was that senior Anand Margis started having second thoughts about the MASTER. The first group to revolt were some Bengali avadhuts—Japeshwaranand, Mrityunjayanand, and Bhavanand. Faced with dissensions in the organisation the Anand Murti according to the charge sheet submitted before the Patna Magistrate “decided to crush the defectors.” Meanwhile Japeshwaranand and Mrityunjayanand started a school at Kak Dwip in West Bengal, two others Sushmitanand and Sudhanand who were posted as principals of two Anand Marg schools in West Bengal left the Anand Marg and joined the Kak Dwip school. The loyalty of VSS circle commander Japeshwaranand was also doubted, according to the charge sheet.

Anandmurti and several other avadhuts suspected that all the defectors were in league with each other. Thus according to the charge-sheet “a conspiracy was hatched to kill Japeshwaranand, Mrityunjayanand, Sudhanand and Sushmitanand”. These avadhuts were murdered.

Soon after on October 1, 1971 (even while Anandmurti was to address the supremely sanctimonious Maha Dharma Chakra at Calcutta) a section of the highest placed avadhuts of Anand Marg, led by Uma Sarkar and Vishokanand, openly convened a meeting of the workers laid bare the face of the wolf behind the compassionate mask of Anandmurti, accused him of misguiding the workers, charged him with parading like a God and called upon the workers to openly revolt against the wanton authority of their Guru.

Thereafter Shrimati Uma Sarkar, accompanied by her 12 year old son Gautam and Vishokanand left for an unspecified

destination and till today their whereabouts are unknown. From their hiding they issued two separate statements which contained, besides all these charges, the names and addresses of 17 such avadhuts who it is believed, have been executed at the command of Anandmurti. They have also expressed the fear that consequent upon revolt their lives are in danger.

Since that fateful day the steel-frame of Anand Marg has crumbled into bits and pieces and a host of avadhuts have come forward with a thousand and one tales of horrid activities going on in this otherwise Yoga-Tantric Organisation and all at the behest of Anandmurti.

On October 24, 1971, top ranking officers of the Central Bureau of Investigation raided the office and the houses of the leaders of the Anand Marg in Patna. Incriminating documents, expensive saries, tape-recorders and computers were seized, besides Rs. 90,000 in cash. Apart from the office of the Anand Marg in Pataliputra, a posh colony in Patna, the CBI raided the house of the Marg chief and a former MP of the Marg.

Arrest of Anandmurti

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar alias Anandmurti was arrested on December 29, 1971 by the CBI on charges of conspiracy and murder. Since then he is lodged in Bankipur Central Jail, Patna. Four other Anand Margis were also arrested in Patna and Varanasi in this connection.

A mild sensation was caused in April and May 1973 by bizarre happenings in Patna and New Delhi connected with the cult of the Marg. The Anand Marg claimed that one of their devotees, avadhut Divyanand, immolated himself during the early hours of the morning of April 9, in Patna in front of the Bihar Assembly Building.

Police sources said that it looked more like a "burning after death" than "death from burns". One of the Marg followers told the police that he neither saw any object burning nor heard any groans or screams of the man who is said to have immolated himself.

On April 24, another case of alleged self-immolation by an avadhut Dineshwaranand, was reported. The incident took place at Purana Qila, in Delhi. But the police and the press were taken by surprise at the choice of the venue and the timing for the self-immolation which, as reported earlier was to have taken place later than the 24th either in front of the Prime Minister's residence or outside Rashtrapati Bhavan.

In connection with the Purana Qila incident a Columbia Broadcasting System Photographer Surendra Mohan Lal and the sound recordist of the same agency Miss Patricia Monique, a French national, were arrested in Bombay. The two were flown to Delhi later. The police alleged that these two persons had taken part in the "conspiracy" to murder the avadhut. The prosecution sought their custody on the plea that the two had been connected with the "serious conspiracy" and that they would be required for investigation which was still "incomplete." The police contended that Miss Patricia had accompanied Lal when he photographed the alleged "self-immolation".

Significantly, both Lal and Patricia were also present in Patna when the Anand Marg avadhut is supposed to have committed "self-immolation". Later Patricia was killed in a mysterious car accident. Lal was driving the car. Mr. Lal has since fled the country and is reported to have taken asylum in Switzerland.

Charged with Murder

The Marg chief Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar and seven of his disciples, were charged with criminal conspiracy and murder of

six Anand Margis at different places in Singbhum district, Bihar.

According to the charge-sheet, Sarkar's avowed intention was to overthrow the Government of India by Constitutional means if possible, and through violent means, if necessary. To achieve this objective, whole time workers were recruited.

According to the prosecution case, Sarkar had set up a squad to kill three avadhuts—Mrityunjayanand, Sudhanand and Sushmitanand—who had doubted the spiritual power of Anandmurti and deserted the Marg. Subsequently the three avadhuts were taken deep into a forest in the night of August 3-4-1970 in an Anand Marg JEEP by loyal avadhuts Satyanand, Madhavanand and Sambodhanand, and stabbed to death after being tied separately to trees.

One of the assailant avadhuts Madhavanand had made judicial confessions. Madhavanand had confessed that he had murdered altogether 18 Anand Marg avadhuts. According to his statement, several murder squads had been set up by Anandmurti to deal with internal rebellious elements.

Approver avadhut Madhavanand gave a hair rising account of the allegedly diabolical murders of six rebel members of the organisation at the committal proceedings in June 1975, before the Special Judicial Magistrate Mr. S.N. Gupta, in Bankipur Central Jail.

Two others, Sambodhanand and Tapas Kumar Banerjee, whose alleged participation in the executions figured in the approver's statement, eluded the police and have been proclaimed absconders.

The Marg chief gave verbal orders for all transfers and postings of whole time workers, whom he used to beat with a stick for any lapse on their part. Stripping them naked and pulling them down by the hair was part of the punishment.

The Marg chief, Madhavanand said, gave specific instructions that seven of the rebel avadhuts should be killed for their anti-Marg activities.

The conspiracy to kill the defectors according to the approver was hatched on the night of July 28, 1970 in the presence of P.R. Sarkar in the TISCO bungalow in Tatanagar. The followers who gathered there were given instructions to demolish the Shishu Niketan, an institution started by the defectors in West Bengal, and were advised to take the help of the Superintendent of Police, Akhori Himachal Prasad of Jamshepdur who was an acharya of the Marg, in case of trouble.

On the orders of the Baba it was decided that one of the seven condemned persons, Tapeshwaranand, should be tortured for extracting a confession about their anti-Marg activities. P.R. Sarkar himself prescribed four types of torture to be applied on Tapeshwaranand.

Inhuman acts of Cruelty

Describing these, Madhavanand told the court that the first stage involved pressing the abdomen with a stick at a point three inches below the navel. If this failed the penis of the victim was to be held in the hand and then its tip hit hard with a wooden ruler. Next came pressing hard with a stick just below the rib from sides. If all these failed the Anandmurti asked the avadhuts to force an iron rod into Tapeshwaranand's anus to extract information.

In another part of the TISCO bungalow Tapeshwaranand suffered these tortures one by one, but he could not hold on beyond the third method and broke down. He confessed.

After this, Tapeshwaranand requested his tormentors to produce him before the Anandmurti for begging his pardon.

Sarkar saw him but rejected his prayer for mercy. The approver said he was a party to all that had happened to Tapeswaranand.

While the condemned Tapeswaranand was taken back to the room where he was tortured, P.R. Sarkar called a meeting of all avadhuts present in the TISCO bungalow and discussed the former's killing. He asked Satyanand, one of the accused in the case, to proceed to Calcutta and bring the other six defectors.

On July 29, around 11 p.m. Madhavanand, Umeshanand, Sambhodhanand and Tapas Kumar Bannerjee, along with Tapeswaranand left the TISCO bungalow on two motor cycles. The last named was told that he was being taken to Ranchi, where the "baba" had gone earlier, for getting his pardon, to which he agreed.

When they reached a dense jungle Tapeswaranand was told that before meeting Anandmurti Kapalik Puja had to be performed and he had to take an oath. According to Marg rites this involved the tying up of the person taking the oath to a tree to which Tapeswaranand agreed. Prior to that he was stripped naked.

The moment he was tied up the approver gagged him from behind and Tapas Kumar Bannerjee stabbed him repeatedly. To make sure that he was dead, Sambodhanand slashed his throat after he was brought down from the tree. After killing Tapeswaranand, the alleged executioners left the scene of the crime.

The conspiracy was to kill three other defectors Mrityunjayanand, Sushmitanand and Sudhanand. According to the approver it was hatched in the residence of Mrs. Geeta Rai incharge of the Marg's women's wing at Salika in West Bengal on August 1, 1970.

Satyanand who had been sent earlier, also was present but he withdrew from the actual act on the ground of illness and

suggested the name of three other members—Pabitra Kumar, Barun Kumar and Satyen Sarkar. The last named was a part time worker.

The three defectors, too, were given the same excuse, that they were being taken to Ranchi for getting the Baba's pardon. Eight of them reached the primary school at Garda, in Tatanagar on the morning of August 3, 1970.

From there the three rebels were taken to the jungle between Tatanagar and Ranchi and killed separately. One by one they were taken from the jeep in which they were travelling into the jungle on the pretext of administering an oath to them. They were tied to trees and either strangled or stabbed to death by the three volunteers, Pabitra Kumar, Barun Kumar and Satyen Sarkar.

Madhavanand has also gone on record as saying that while Barun Kumar was trying to stab Sudhanand in the neck, the dagger hit his (Madhavanand's) left hand inflicting injuries on three fingers. This happened when Madhavanand placed his left hand behind Sudhanand's neck to steady it, because the last named was moving it to avoid dagger blows. He showed the injuries to the judge.

Having participated in four killings Madhavanand told in his court statement he had developed a dislike for it and requested to pardon two other defectors Japeshwaranand and Amulya Kumar and free them. But the Marg chief refused, so he had no other alternative but to kill them.

Before doing so he was told by Sarveshwaranand that the Baba had issued fresh instructions for disposing of the bodies. These were ; deface the body by burying it with petrol and then throw it into a river, behead the body and throw it in a river ; then bury the head. These instructions were issued because the bodies of the four persons killed were identifiable.

While being given these instructions on the night of August 7, 1970, Madhavanand and his accomplices were also told that along with Japeshwaranand, whose turn it was, another sanyasi named Ajayanand also was to be killed within 24 hours.

Leaving Ranchi around 4 p.m. on August 8, 1970, Madhavanand, Sambodhanand and Shankaranand along with the victims reached Anand Shila, a tribal welfare centre in a dense jungle, 35 miles from Ranchi, at 5.00 p.m.

It was decided tht Sambodhanand should take Japeshwaranand to Anand Peeth, another centre of the Marg 10 miles from Anand Shila and kill him with thehelp of Brahmadeo Sharma. And they left.

The approver and Shankaranand were left to deal with Japeshwaranand. Around 9 p.m. in a dense part of the jungle Japeshwaranand was persuaded to take the oath in Marg style—naked and tied to a tree. While Madhavanand pressed a piece of cloth on the mouth and nose of the victim, Shankaranand strangled him with a rope. The body was later cut down from the tree and carried to a river where Shankaranand beheaded him. The body was thrown into the river and the head buried.

The sixth defector, Acharya Amulya Kumar, was strangled in the jungle of Laara, in Singhbhum District on August 15, 1970. His face was burnt beyond recognition with petrol.

Approver Madhavanand has escaped two alleged assassination attempts by Anand Margis. The committal inquiry has ended and now Anandmurti has to face trial in sessions.

Political Murders

In 1973, top Margis met in a conference in Kathmandu and drew up plans to meet the situation arising out of the arrest of

P.R. Sarkar. One of the key persons to attend this conclave was one Judie Marchel, a Harvard Scholar, who joined the Marg while she was in Manila. At the instance of avadhut Bimalanand, who had gone to the Philippines as Sarkar's emissary, she came to India in 1969 and stayed on. Soon she got very close to Anandmurti and took up the name Madhuri.

The exact whereabouts of Judie Marchel are not presently known, but it may not be too far-fetched to surmise that she had links with the notorious American agency. However, it is reliably learnt that she has been launching a tirade against the Indian Government from Hong Kong and big cities of U.S.A.

The facts now made public reveal that Anand Margis hatched the conspiracy to murder Railway Minister, L.M. Mishra to terrorise the government and the people and to keep up the crumbling morale of what remained of the Marg after the arrest of Sarkar. The CBI submitted on November 12 a charge-sheet in the court of the special magistrate in Patna, accusing 12 Anand Margis of conspiracy and murder of Railway Minister, L.N. Mishra.

The conspiracy to kill Mr. Mishra was hatched at village Trimohan in Bhagalpur district, where it was decided to kill avadhut Madhavanand, (who is the approver in the case against Marg chief P.R. Sarkar) Mr. Mishra, the then Chief Minister Ghafoor and some Government officers connected with the Anand Marg case.

Each of the conspirators was assigned his task. Vinayanand was deputed to kill approver Madhavanand, Visheshwaranand to kill Mr. Ghafoor and Arteshanand and Sudevanand to kill the officers connected with the case.

According to reliable sources, the officers who were the targets of Anand Marg's fury included CBI Director Hingorani, Patna Central Jail Superintendent Bharat Prasad Singh and jail doctor Rahman.

The whole conspiracy was the result of messages sent by Anand Marg chief P.R. Sarkar from the jail asking his followers to prove their bravery by bringing him out from the jail and not to rest until they had killed their enemies.

A "revolutionary group" was formed some time in July 1973 in Patna and joined by Vinayanand, Visheshwaranand and others. These two avadhuts discarded their robes, shaved their long hair and beard and changed their names to Vijay and Jagdish.

Another accused Ramashray Prasad had collected five bombs. They were joined by accused Santoshanand, Sudevanand, Arteshanand and Ram Kumar Singh who set out for procurement of arms and ammunition.

A meeting was held at Trimohan village in Bhagalpur District where tasks were assigned. Vinayanand attempted to kill approver Madhavanand in Patna collectorate by throwing a handgrenade which did not explode. He tried to escape by jumping into the Ganga but was apprehended.

In December 1973, and January 1974 unsuccessful attempts were made on the life of Mr. Abdul Ghafoor, then the Chief Minister of Bihar, in two Patna hotels.

Meanwhile, Santoshanand and Sudevanand under the assumed names of Vinod and Ramchandra procured handgrenades from accused Ram Nagina Prasad from West Bengal.

In July 1974, accused Vikram brought three handgrenades and handed them over to Santoshanand to be given to Bhudhishwaranand, who is now dead.

This way, arms collection continued. The object of the conspiracy was to create terror through the murder of important personages in the Government, one of whom, according to 'the

views entertained by the conspirators, was Mr. L. N. Mishra, who was considered to be not only one of the most important Ministers in the Government of India but also wielding considerable influence in the functioning of the State Government. The underlying aim in the elimination of Mr. L. N. Mishra was to force the hands of the Government to set at large P. R. Sarkar *alias* Anandmurtiji.

In order to achieve this object of the conspiracy, the conspirators set their machinery in motion and planned the murder of Mr. L. N. Mishra, who was to arrive on 2 January, 1975 at Samastipur to inaugurate the opening of a broadgauge railway line from Samstipur to Muzaffarpur. It had been decided to arrange the inaugural function on platform No. 3 of Samastipur railway station by the railway authorities on a large scale. Entry to this function was regulated by means of passes.

Accused Ranjan Dwivedi, who is an active Anand Margi, reached Samastipur on or about 1 January, 1975 along with Santoshanand and Sudevanand. He managed to secure passes to enable the three to gain entry to platform No. 2. Accused Vikram had already reached Samastipur earlier. Santoshanand and Sudevanand had brought three handgrenades.

There with the help of the passes they succeeded in entering platform No. 3 before the arrival of Mr. L. N. Mishra. Each one of them was carrying one handgrenade.

After the arrival of the special train which brought Mr. L. N. Mishra, the three accused *viz.*, Santoshanand, Sudevanand and Vikram managed to get closer to the rostrum from the northern side of the platform No. 3 and accused Sudevanand in pursuance of the scheduled plan threw a live handgrenade on the rostrum after the Railway Minister had finished his speech.

While escaping accused Vikram, in order to avoid detection, threw his unused handgrenade on the metregauge line near platform No. 3.

This was later picked up by Rajendra Sahu, minor son of Mr. Mahadev Sahu, assistant accounts officer, Samastipur. The boy took it to his residence where it exploded accidentally causing injuries to him as well as to his cousin.

Accused Santoshanand, Sudevanand and Vikram managed to escape from the scene of crime un-noticed and were later arrested.

The Anandmargis who have been sent for trial are: Santoshanand, Sudevanand, Vikram, Ranjan Dwivedi, Ram Nagina Prasad, Arteshanand, Vinayanand, Ramrup, Gopalji, Visheshwaranand, Ram Kumar Singh and Ramashray Prasad Singh.

Attempt on the life of Chief Justice

Another ghastly crime on a national scale attempted was to murder Chief Justice A. N. Ray of the Supreme Court of India. Enquiries completed by now again reveal the hand of Anand Marg in the abortive plan. A Supreme Court lawyer and a gang of three "fanatic Anand Margis" have been arrested in connection with the throwing of hand grenades into the car of the Chief Justice of India, Mr. A. N. Ray on March 20, 1975. This was disclosed in the Rajya Sabha on August 2, 1975 by the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr. Om Mehta, while making a statement on investigation of the case of the CBI.

Mr. Mehta gave the name of the Supreme Court lawyer as Ranjan Dwivedi, who is reported to have identified the Chief Justice to the assailants. Mr. Dwivedi has an American wife but she is not in India at present.

Mr. Mehta said there was "link" between the grenade attack on the Chief Justice and the murder of the former Railway Minister, L. N. Mishra. But he declined to say anything further as the Samastipur incident was under investigation by a commission.

Making a statement in Lok Sabha the same day, Mr. Om Mehta said the CBI had been able to get not only oral but documentary evidence to establish the complicity of the three and a few others in the outrage. A charge-sheet has now been filed.

Mr. Mehta identified the Margis as Santoshanand, Studevanand and Vikram. While the first two actually threw the grenades—one each—into the car, the third was with them on the spot. It may be recalled that Santoshanand was the Editor of the English daily PROUT published from the capital.

Mr. Om Mehta said the conspiracy resulting in this outrage was hatched some time in early March by a gang of fanatic Anand Margis of which Santoshanand, Sudevanand and Vikram were the principal Members. After throwing the grenades, Santoshanand and Sudevanand stayed for a short period in a room which had been reserved for them in a fictitious name. While staying there Santoshanand got certain letters written in Hindi and English, which were posted to various addresses, including one threatening letter to the Chief Justice of India.



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